

# SYNOPSIS

## Up a Lazy River: The Village and Town Cancellations of The Gambia

### PURPOSE OF EXHIBIT:

This one frame exhibit will introduce viewers to the postal routes and cancellations of the West African river nation of The Gambia.

### TREATMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPORTANCE:

Primarily using covers (and individual stamps where covers are unknown or unavailable), the exhibit documents the marcophily, rates and routes emanating from the postal villages and towns of The Gambia. I use the vehicle of an imaginary trip down the Gambia River beginning at its easternmost village in order to organize the presentation of this material. Despite being confined to a single frame, these covers provide an important window into commercial, social and religious activities within The Gambia.

### RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL STUDY:

As the map on the title page illustrates, the oddly-shaped nation is a political creation rather than a geographic or ethnically-based entity. This exhibitor's research into the commercial and political origins of the country extends to original testimony within the UK House of Lords concerning negotiations with the French to "trade" The Gambia for other African territory in the 1870s. The attached bibliography, all from the exhibitor's personal library, confirm the extent of original research.

### CHALLENGE FACTOR, RARITY AND CONDITION:

If this exhibit were simply about the marcophily of villages, many alternative examples could have been used. But presenting a commercial, social and religious profile of The Gambia necessitated searching for covers whose addressees and senders contributed to completing the story. Many of these covers contain rare cancellations, including the only known Jessadi cancellation on cover. Several other one-of-a-kind covers are also found on these pages. Much of this "story" goes back to the 1890-1930 period. One of the bigger challenges was to present covers from this period that are in superior condition. Nearly all of the material exhibited is in very fine or better condition.

### PRESENTATION:

Each page contains discussion of rates, routes and usages. Where appropriate, observations about the senders or addressees is used to complete the story. Given the breadth of materials to be displayed in a single frame, it was necessary to overlap some covers. In order to avoid clutter, additional information about the stamps, covers and cancellations is documented in the attached Exhibit Catalog. Rate, route and date information appears in Bondini typeface; notes and observations are in *Ariel italic* typeface. Red-framed items are either unique or extremely rare.

### ORGANIZATION:

Starting at the easternmost postal village of Fattoto, we wend our way down river, "visiting" the villages that had post offices. Then we explore the postal usages of the Traveling Post Office (TPO). Finally we stop at the port town and capital of Bathurst.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The attached bibliography includes original Colonial Government source documents and early exploration histories of The Gambia. Also included are essentially all of the philatelic and postal history reference books on The Gambia. All of these works are in the exhibitor's personal library and were sources for the exhibit.

### EXHIBIT CATALOG:

The Exhibit Catalog contains the backup details for each of the covers and stamps in the exhibit. Included are Stanley Gibbons catalog numbers, Proud cancellations and PLSG postal labels.